

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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## A STRANGE STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MY NOVEL," "RIENZI," &c.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

In spite of the previous assurance of Mrs. Poyntz, it was not without an uneasy apprehension that I approached the cedar-tree, under which Mrs. Ashleigh still sat, her friend beside her. I looked on the fair creature whose arm was linked in mine. So young, so singularly lovely, and with all the gifts of birth and fortune which bend avarice and ambition the more submissively to youth and beauty, I felt as if I had wronged what a parent might justly deem her natural lot.

"Oh, if your mother should disapprove," said I, falteringly.

Lilian lent on my arm less lightly. "If I had thought so," she said, with her soft blush, "should I be thus by your side?"

So we passed under the boughs of the dark tree, and Lilian left me, and kissed Mrs. Ashleigh's cheek, then seating herself on the turf, laid her head quietly on her mother's lap. I looked on the Queen of the Hill, whose keen eye shot over me. I thought there was a momentary expression of pain or displeasure on her countenance; but it passed. Still there seemed to me something of irony, as well as of triumph or congratulation, in the half smile with which she quitted her seat, and in the tone with which she whispered, as she glided by me to the open sward, "So, then, it is settled."

She walked lightly and quickly down the lawn. When she was out of sight I breathed more freely. I took the seat which she had left, by Mrs. Ashleigh's side, and said, "A little while ago I spoke of myself as a man without kindred, without home, and now I come to you and ask for both."

Mrs. Ashleigh looked at me benignly, then raised her daughter's face from her lap, and whispered, "Lilian," and Lilian's lips moved, but I did not hear her answer. Her mother did. She took Lilian's hand, simply placed it in mine, and said, "As she chooses, I choose; whom she loves, I love."

### CHAPTER XIX.

FROM that evening till the day Mrs. Ashleigh and Lilian went on the dreaded visit, I was

always at their house, when my avocations allowed me to steal to it; and during those few days, the happiest I had ever known, it seemed to me that years could not have more deepened my intimacy with Lilian's exquisite nature,—made me more reverential of its purity, or more enamoured of its sweetness. I could detect in her but one fault, and I rebuked myself for believing that it was a fault. We see many who neglect the minor duties of life, who lack watchful forethought and considerate care for others, and we recognise the cause of this failing in levity or egotism. Certainly neither of those tendencies of character could be ascribed to Lilian. Yet still in daily trifles there was something of that neglect, some lack of that care and forethought. She loved her mother with fondness and devotion, yet it never occurred to her, to aid in those petty household cares in which her mother centred so much of habitual interest. She was full of tenderness and pity to all want and suffering, yet many a young lady on the Hill was more actively beneficent—visiting the poor in their sickness, or instructing their children in the Infant Schools. I was persuaded that her love for me was deep and truthful; it was clearly void of all ambition; doubtless she would have borne unflinching and contented whatever the world considers to be sacrifice and privation,—yet I should never have expected her to take her share in the troubles of ordinary life. I could never have applied to her the homely but significant name of helpmate. I reproach myself while I write for noticing such defect—if defect it were—in what may be called the practical routine of our positive, trivial, human existence. No doubt it was this that had caused Mrs. Poyntz's harsh judgment against the wisdom of my choice. But such chiller shade upon her charming nature was reflected from no inert, unamiable self-love. It was but the consequence of that self-absorption which the habit of reverie had fostered. I cautiously abstained from all allusion to those visionary deceptions, which she had confided to me, as the truthful impressions of spirit, if not of sense. To me any approach to what I termed superstition was displeasing, any indulgence of phantasies not within the measured and beaten tracks of healthful imagination, more than displeased me in her—it alarmed. I would not by a word encourage her in persuasions which I felt it would be at present premature to reason

against, and cruel indeed to ridicule. I was convinced that of themselves these mists round her native intelligence, engendered by a solitary and musing childhood, would subside in the fuller daylight of wedded life. She seemed pained when she saw how resolutely I shunned a subject dear to her thoughts. She made one or two timid attempts to renew it, but my grave looks sufficed to check her. Once or twice, indeed, on such occasions, she would turn away and leave me, but she soon came back; that gentle heart could not bear one unkindlier shade between itself and what it loved. It was agreed that our engagement should be, for the present, confided only to Mrs. Poyntz. When Mrs. Ashleigh and Lilian returned, which would be in a few weeks at furthest, it should be proclaimed; and our marriage could take place in the autumn, when I should be most free for a brief holiday from professional toils.

So we parted—as lovers part. I felt none of those jealous fears which, before we were affianced, had made me tremble at the thought of separation, and had conjured up irresistible rivals. But it was with a settled heavy gloom that I saw her depart. From earth was gone a glory; from life a blessing.

#### CHAPTER XX.

DURING the busy years of my professional career, I had snatched leisure for some professional treatises, which had made more or less sensation, and one of them, entitled *The Vital Principle*; its *Waste and Supply*, had gained a wide circulation among the general public. This last treatise contained the results of certain experiments, then new in chemistry, which were adduced in support of a theory I entertained as to the reinvigoration of the human system by principles similar to those which Liebig has applied to the replenishment of an exhausted soil—viz. the giving back to the frame those essentials to its nutrition, which it has lost by the action or accident of time; or supplying that special pabulum or energy in which the individual organism is constitutionally deficient; and neutralising or counterbalancing that in which it superabounds—a theory upon which some eminent physicians have more recently improved with signal success. But on these essays, slight and suggestive, rather than dogmatic, I set no value. I had been for the last two years engaged on a work of much wider range, endeared to me by a far bolder ambition—a work upon which I fondly hoped to found an enduring reputation as a severe and original physiologist. It was an Inquiry into Organic Life, similar in comprehensiveness of survey to that by which the illustrious Müller, of Berlin, has enriched the science of our age; however inferior, alas, to that august combination of thought and learning, in the judgment which checks presumption, and the genius which adorns speculation. But at that day I was carried away by the ardour of composition, and I admired my performance because I loved my

labour. This work had been entirely laid aside for the last agitated month; now that Lilian was gone, I resumed it earnestly, as the sole occupation that had power and charm enough to rouse me from the aching sense of void and loss.

The very night of the day she went, I reopened my MS. I had left off at the commencement of a chapter “Upon Knowledge as derived from our Senses.” As my convictions on this head were founded on the well-known arguments of Locke and Condillac against innate ideas, and on the reasonings by which Hume has resolved the combination of sensations into a general idea, to an impulse arising merely out of habit, so I set myself to oppose, as a dangerous concession to the sentimentalities or mysticism of a pseudo philosophy, the doctrine favoured by most of our recent physiologists, and of which some of the most eminent of German metaphysicians have accepted the substance, though refining into a subtlety its positive form—I mean the doctrine which Müller himself has expressed in these words:

“That innate ideas may exist, cannot in the slightest degree be denied; it is, indeed, a fact. All the ideas of animals, which are induced by instinct, are innate and immediate. Something presented to the mind, a desire to attain which is at the same time given. The new-born lamb and foal have such innate ideas, which lead them to follow their mother and suck the teats. Is it not in some measure the same with the intellectual ideas of man?”\*

To this question I answered with an indignant “no.” A “yes” would have shaken my creed of materialism to the dust. I wrote on rapidly, warmly. I defined the properties and meted the limits of natural laws, which I would not admit that a Deity himself could alter. I clamped and soldered dogma to dogma in the links of my tinkered logic, till out from my page, to my own complacent eye, grew Intellectual Man, as the pure formation of his material senses; mind, or what is called soul, born from and nurtured by them alone; through them to act, and to perish with the machine they moved. Strange, that at the very time my love for Lilian might have taught me that there are mysteries in the core of the feelings which my analysis of ideas could not solve, I should so stubbornly have opposed as unreal all that could be referred to the spiritual! Strange, that at the very time when the thought that I might lose from this life the being I had known scarce a month, had just before so appalled me, I should thus complacently sit down to prove that, according to the laws of the nature which my passion obeyed, I must lose for eternity the blessing I now hoped I had won to my life! But how distinctly dissimilar is man in his conduct from man in his systems! See the poet reclined under forest-boughs, conning odes to his mistress; follow him out into the world;

\* Müller's *Elements of Physiology*, vol. ii. p. 184. Translated by Dr. Baley.

no mistress ever lived for him there!\* See the hard man of science, so austere in his passionless problems; follow him now where the brain rests from its toil, where the heart finds its Sabbath—what child is so tender, so yielding and soft?

But I had proved to my own satisfaction that poet and sage are dust, and no more, when the pulse ceases to beat. And at that consolatory conclusion my pen stopped.

Suddenly beside me I distinctly heard a sigh—a compassionate, mournful sigh. The sound was unmistakable. I started from my seat; looked round, amazed to discover no one—no living thing! The windows were closed, the night was still. That sigh was not the wail of the wind. But there, in the darker angle of the room, what was that? A silvery whiteness—vaguely shaped as a human form—receding, fading, gone! Why I know not—for no face was visible, no form, if form it were, more distinct than the colourless outline—why I know not, but I cried aloud, “Lilian! Lilian!” My voice came strangely back to my own ear. I paused, then smiled and blushed at my folly. “So I, too, have learned what is superstition,” I muttered to myself. “And here is an anecdote at my own expense (as Müller frankly tells us anecdotes of the illusions which would haunt his eyes, shut or open), an anecdote I may quote when I come to my Chapter on the Cheats of the Senses and Spectral Phantasms.” I went on with my book, and wrote till the lights waned in the grey of the dawn. And I said then, in the triumph of my pride, as I laid myself down to rest, “I have written that which allots with precision man’s place in the region of nature; written that which will found a school—form disciples; and race after race of those who cultivate truth through pure reason, shall accept my bases if they enlarge my building.” And again I heard the sigh, but this time it caused no surprise. “Certainly,” I murmured, “a very strange thing is the nervous system!” So I turned on my pillow, and, wearied out, fell asleep.

#### CHAPTER XXI.

THE next day, the last of the visiting patients to whom my forenoons were devoted had just quitted me, when I was summoned in haste to attend the steward of a Sir Philip Derval, not residing at his family seat, which was about five miles from L——. It was rarely indeed that persons so far from the town, when of no higher rank than this applicant, asked my services. But it was my principle to go wherever I was summoned; my profession was not gain, it was healing, to which gain was an incident, not the essential. This case the messenger reported as urgent. I went on horseback, and rode fast; but swiftly as I cantered through the

\* Cowley, who wrote so elaborate a series of amatory poems, is said “never to have been in love but once, and then he never had resolution to tell his passion.”—Johnson’s Lives of the Poets: COWLEY.

village that skirted the approach to Sir Philip Derval’s park, the evident care bestowed on the accommodation of the cottagers forcibly struck me. I felt that I was on the lands of a rich, intelligent, and benevolent proprietor. Entering the park, and passing before the manor-house, the contrast between the neglect and decay of the absentee’s stately hall and the smiling homes of his villagers was disconsolately mournful.

An imposing pile, built apparently by Vanburgh, with decorated pilasters, pompous portico, and grand perron (or double flight of stairs to the entrance), enriched with urns and statues, but discoloured, mildewed, chipped, half hidden with unpruned creepers and ivy. Most of the windows were closed with shutters, decaying for want of paint; in some of the casements the panes were broken; the peacock perched on the shattered balustrade that fenced garden overgrown with weeds. The sun glared hotly on the place, and made its ruinous condition still more painfully apparent. I was glad when a winding in the park road shut the house from my sight. Suddenly, I emerged through a copse of ancient yew-trees, and before me there gleamed, in abrupt whiteness, a building evidently designed for the family mausoleum. Classical in its outline, with the blind iron door niched into stone walls of massive thickness, and surrounded by a funereal garden of roses and evergreens, fenced with an iron rail, parti-gilt.

The suddenness with which this House of the Dead came upon me heightened almost into pain, if not into awe, the dismal impression which the aspect of the deserted home, with its neighbourhood, had made. I spurred my horse and soon arrived at the door of my patient, who lived in a fair brick house at the other extremity of the park.

I found my patient, a man somewhat advanced in years, but of a robust conformation, in bed; he had been seized with a fit, which was supposed to be apoplectic, a few hours before; but was already sensible, and out of immediate danger. After I had prescribed a few simple remedies, I took aside the patient’s wife, and went with her to the parlour below stairs, to make some inquiry about her husband’s ordinary regimen and habits of life. These seemed sufficiently regular; I could discover no apparent cause for the attack, which presented symptoms not familiar to my experience. “Has your husband ever had such fits before?”

“Never!”

“Had he experienced any sudden emotion? Had he heard any unexpected news? or had anything happened to put him out?”

The woman looked much disturbed at these inquiries. I pressed them more urgently. At last she burst into tears, and, clasping my hand, said, “Oh! doctor, I ought to tell you—I sent for you on purpose—yet I fear you will not believe me—my good man has seen a ghost!”

“A ghost!” said I, repressing a smile. “Well, tell me all, that I may prevent the ghost coming again.”

The woman's story was prolix. Its substance was this: Her husband, habitually an early riser, had left his bed that morning still earlier than usual, to give directions about some cattle that were to be sent for sale to a neighbouring fair. An hour afterwards he had been found by a shepherd near the mausoleum apparently lifeless. On being removed to his own house, he had recovered speech, and bidding all except his wife leave the room, he then told her that on walking across the park towards the cattle-sheds he had seen, what appeared to him at first, a pale light by the iron door of the mausoleum. On approaching nearer, this light changed into the distinct and visible form of his master, Sir Philip Derval, who was then abroad—supposed to be in the East—where he had resided for many years. The impression on the steward's mind was so strong, that he called out, "Oh! Sir Philip!" when, looking still more intently, he perceived that the face was that of a corpse. As he continued to gaze, the apparition seemed gradually to recede, as if vanishing into the sepulchre itself. He knew no more; he became unconscious. It was the excess of the poor woman's alarm, on hearing this strange tale, that had made her resolve to send for me instead of the parish apothecary. She fancied so astounding a cause for her husband's seizure could only be properly dealt with by some medical man reputed to have more than ordinary learning. And the steward himself objected to the apothecary in the immediate neighbourhood, as more likely to annoy him by gossip than a physician from a comparative distance.

I took care not to lose the confidence of the good wife by parading too quickly my disbelief in the phantom her husband declared that he had seen; but as the story itself seemed at once to decide the nature of the fit to be epileptic, I began to tell her of similar delusions which, in my experience, had occurred to those subjected to epilepsy, and finally soothed her into the conviction that the apparition was clearly reducible to natural causes. Afterwards, I led her on to talk about Sir Philip Derval, less from any curiosity I felt about the absent proprietor than from a desire to re-familiarise her own mind to his image as a living man. The steward had been in the service of Sir Philip's father, and had known Sir Philip himself from a child. He was warmly attached to his master, whom the old woman described as a man of rare benevolence and great eccentricity, which last she imputed to his studious habits. He had succeeded to the title and estates as a minor. For the first few years after attaining his majority he had mixed much in the world. When at Derval Court his house had been filled with gay companions, and was the scene of lavish hospitality. But the estate was not in proportion to the grandeur of the mansion, still less to the expenditure of the owner. He had become greatly embarrassed, and some late disappointment (so it was rumoured) occurring simultaneously with his pecuniary difficulties, he had

suddenly changed his way of life, shut himself up from his old friends, lived in seclusion, taking to books and scientific pursuits, and, as the old woman said, vaguely but expressively, "to odd ways." He had gradually, by an economy that, towards himself, was penurious, but which did not preclude much judicious generosity to others, cleared off his debts, and, once more rich, he had suddenly quitted the country, and taken to a life of travel. He was now about forty-eight years old, and had been eighteen years abroad. He wrote frequently to his steward, giving him minute and thoughtful instructions in regard to the employment, comforts, and homes of the peasantry, but peremptorily ordering him to spend no money on the grounds and mansion, stating, as a reason why the latter might be allowed to fall into decay, his intention to pull it down whenever he returned to England.

I stayed some time longer than my engagements well warranted at my patient's house, not leaving till the sufferer, after a quiet sleep, had removed from his bed to his arm-chair, taken food, and seemed perfectly recovered from his attack.

Riding homeward, I mused on the difference that education makes, even pathologically, between man and man. Here was a brawny inhabitant of rural fields, leading the healthiest of lives, not conscious of the faculty we call imagination, stricken down almost to death's door by his fright at an optical illusion, explicable, if examined, by the same simple causes which had impressed me the night before with a moment's belief in a sound and a spectre—me, who, thanks to sublime education, went so quietly to sleep a few minutes after, convinced that no phantom, the ghostliest that ear ever heard or eye ever saw, can be anything else but a nervous phenomenon.

#### THE BOUNDLESS BED-CHAMBER.

EÖTHEN has told us of the pleasurable sensations experienced by the traveller who becomes familiar with Mother Earth, and seeks repose without fear on her bosom, calmly enjoying the glories of his "boundless bed-chamber." I am a traveller who have spent some nights in that bed-chamber with sensations far from pleasurable.

There are as yet no guide-books to the Rocky Mountains. Mounted on a stout Indian pony or light-limbed Texian mule, of matchless powers of endurance, with a leatheren canteen of water and the lightest of camp-kettles slung to his saddle, the wanderer may traverse the rolling prairies, explore the rugged mountain ranges, and test his own capabilities of supporting the pains of thirst, upon the salt and barren table-lands which are to be met with "beyond white settlements." He is left to study for himself, as rare occasion serves, the lawlessness of human nature in the half Mexican towns on the Upper Rio Grande, or, without Murray's help to the best hotel, must share with the solitary trapper by the San Pedro his supper of roast beaver-tail.

But he is not too dependent upon hospitality. Fish are in every creek; game, although not so plentiful as might be supposed, is still in most places a sure resource; and with a little bag of dried beef or parched corn ground by the hands of Indian squaws, the traveller who has few wants may have few troubles.

Journeying in this manner, and enjoying it, I nevertheless did once fall into sore trouble.

I was on the way to a U. S. military post on the frontier, and the road to it lay across the wide valley of the Colorado of the west, where that river, the Nile of North America, divides the great Californian desert from the wild and little known territory of New Mexico. After a hot ride over the low barren table-land, which extends from within a dozen miles of the river to the base of the rugged granite wall that bounds the horizon, I came to a point where the path suddenly descended a steep of a hundred feet. It was evident that I had reached a level partially blessed by the great periodical inundation. The acacia of the New World—mezquit-tree—with its gnarled stem and pale green foliage, showed that the ground knew moisture. Farther on, the appearance of a covey of crested quail, piping and fluttering among the bushes, proved that water could not be far distant, and that to find it I should not be obliged to go as far as the river itself, or to force my way through the almost impenetrable jungle on its banks. The steady manner in which the quail advanced in one direction, testified that they were going to their watering-place. I followed them for more than a mile, and was enchanted by the sight most welcome to a wayfarer through the desert. This sight was, a deep oval basin, about fifty or sixty yards in length, bordered by shady willow-trees, and having in the centre one spot of moist black mud—on its surface, a shallow pool containing about a cupful of water. From the numerous footprints in the neighbourhood of this miniature tank, it was evident that many small animals, especially the *coyoté* (the American jackal), were in the habit of visiting it. I determined to execute a public work, and confer lasting benefit upon the population of the desert, by converting this miserable pool into a decent well. The spot, indeed, was in many ways so attractive, that it was impossible to resist the temptation of remaining there for a few days. At each end of the basin was a large plot of grass—a rare sight in that burnt-up land—which my horse had already begun to crop while I was engaged in my amateur survey. Close by, was a grove of mezquit, laden with golden branches of *pecheta*—the staff of life to the New Mexican horses. There was abundance of dry wood, and what more was required for a perfect camp, if the well should but turn out well?

Having picketed the horse on the little meadow, I set to work with a bowie-knife, and in the course of a few hours dug what I regarded as a very pretty well. It filled rapidly with water, and towards evening the water became as

pure and clear as lip could wish. My horse appeared to enjoy the unwonted luxury of grass, but he did not properly appreciate the glory of being the first settler and improver in the desert. Evidently he longed for the society of his own kind; being so restless that I rather feared he might break away in the night and join a little herd of ponies and mules belonging to an adventurous pioneer, who had established a solitary rancho about twenty-five miles off, among the cane-brakes and cotton-wood groves on the bank of the river. I thought it prudent, therefore, to "hobble" as well as picket him before retiring to rest.

Lying beside a cheerful fire, watching the great comet which then blazed in the sky, and tranquilly smoking the pipe of contentment, I experienced all the exquisite joys of the boundless chamber, and after a night of glorious and wholesome sleep, such as the dweller in houses seldom knows, I rose and inspected my new well. Numerous *coyoté* tracks around its margin showed that the oasis had not been without visitors during the night. My horse appeared reconciled to his position, and to luxuriate in the new sensation of repose. Feeling that he might be safely trusted alone, I started on an exploratory walk in the direction of the river. On every side, there extended a monotonous and desert plain, which in many places bore signs of having been partially overflowed. Except a low ridge of yellow sand-hill, there were no breaks in the dreary level, save here and there a stunted shrub or a thorny old mezquit-tree. On the summit of the sand-hill, were the remains of an Indian encampment, where a Yuma family had evidently fixed their summer quarters during the last inundation. A rude sun-shade of posts and boughs, and a few broken jars, were the only traces of the former occupants: who had returned with the subsiding waters to the willow-shaded lagoons and bayous of the mosquito-haunted river.

From this slight elevation could be seen the long sierras of New Mexico, and the solitary precipitous peaks that rise like beacons in the desert of California: while, a few miles to the westward, a dark green line marked the course of the Colorado. On returning to my camp, I found all well, and my mind was relieved on observing that neither the *coyotés* nor the ground rats had been able to reach the bag of provisions, which I had left hung to the branch of a tree. Reposing in the shade of the willows, I applauded myself for the well I had called into existence, and regretted that the fertile ground around it was too limited for the working out of any ideas of an agricultural nature. Three days were spent thus agreeably, in idle watching of the manners and customs of the wild creatures by day, and in gazing at the comet by night. Sometimes, when I lay awake, I shot a quail, and it amused me to cook him à la braise, while the never-failing pipe was famous company. At last I became sensible that even these simple pleasures must come to an end, and that, as I had only provision for a

few days more, I must proceed upon my journey. I saddled my horse, and took what I supposed to be a last look at the spot where I had passed three days, which Sedjid, Emperor of Ethiopia, might have envied; but hardly had I ridden two hundred yards when my unlucky horse, startled by a rattlesnake in a bush, suddenly shied, and, bounding to one side, lighted on a spot undermined in every direction by ground rats. Next moment we were rolling in the sand together. The horse was on his legs again in a few seconds, and then, unlike the faithful steeds of which one has read in romances, gave a snort of astonishment and a glance of defiance at his master, who lay crushed and helpless on the ground, and then started off at a smart canter. I lay for a few minutes half stunned, and afraid to ascertain whether any bones were broken, but it soon appeared that I was only frightfully bruised, and that the best thing to be done was to return as fast as possible to the water and the friendly shade of trees. Being unable to walk, I was obliged to crawl, after the manner of the wounded Zouaves in the French battle-pieces, so that it took me nearly an hour to reach the well. Most fortunately—for I owe my life to the accident—the havresack containing provisions had come loose from the saddle when the horse rolled over; but the wretched animal, in taking himself off, had carried away my rug and blankets. This loss was a serious one, for the nights were beginning to be chilly, although still the days were warm. However, it was again a happy event for me that the accident had happened so near the well. Had it occurred a mile away, I might have died of thirst.

I spent the forenoon in reflecting on all the possibilities of the situation. I was at a great distance from the rarely traversed road across the flats, in a spot by which probably no white man would ever pass, and where there was but small chance of seeing even an Indian. The horse, I knew very well, would go to a pasture-ground twenty-five miles distant, with which he formerly had been familiar; but he might not be seen for weeks by the men who lived there, and, even if he were seen, there was not the slightest chance of their making any search for me. I had provisions for three or four days; the question was, whether or no I should by that time be able to walk. The day wore on while I was revolving those unpleasant questions, and it was with the greatest difficulty that I managed to move myself a little as the sun changed its place in the heavens, so as to continue to lie in the shade.

My death-like quiescence seemed to reassure the numerous visitors who cheered my solitude. A flock of quail drank without fear at the well within a couple of yards of my feet; it would have been easy to shoot one, for although my stock of ammunition had gone with my horse I still had the six shots of my revolver. But, it seemed to me treacherous to do so. The birds apparently enjoyed their sense of my harmless-ness. They were my chief amusement. The efforts made by a coyoté to surprise the strag-

glers, and their organised system of sentries and alarm calls, interested me so much that I sometimes almost forgot my distressful situation.

It soon appeared that the coyotés began to take a deep interest in my condition. Two or three surveyed me from under cover of the bushes on the other side of the basin, with an air of the most cheerful expectation in their fox-like faces. There was not the slightest danger of an attack from them. The mere voice of a human being is enough to scare a troop of these poor jackals, but their persistent attentions were by no means consolatory.

These coyotés were not the sole enemies against which my pleasant friends, the quail, had to be on their guard. A large rattlesnake, probably the snake that had alarmed my horse and caused his fall, stealthily glided forward from the bushes, but to my great satisfaction could not succeed in catching the little feathered sentinel off guard. With a shrill cry of alarm and a loud whirring of wings, the whole covey took up a safe position in a tree. The snake sulkily coiled himself, until, becoming conscious of my presence, he lifted his head and surveyed me with much curiosity. The presence of the creature struck me with horror, although I had experience enough of snakes to know that there was no danger to be apprehended. I threw at him a piece of dry wood, with all the force of my uninjured arm; upon the receipt of which insult he slowly uncoiled, softly hissing the while, and moved off: not without a certain dignity.

At last, after a very long day, the sun disappeared behind the sand-hills, and it soon became bitterly cold. Of course I was unable to collect firewood, and was forced to shiver through the night as well as I could in my boundless bed-chamber, with feelings of bitter wrath against the treachery of the ungrateful horse by whom my blankets had been carried off. Several times I fell asleep, though never losing the consciousness of pain and cold; several times I awoke with a start, to find a coyoté stealing off from a close inspection of my face. The provision-bag, which I was now unable to hang on a tree as I had done during the three days when this oasis was my paradise, attracted the ground rats, who constantly disturbed me with their eagerness for biscuit. This night of dreariness was enlivened only by the notes of a screech-owl in a neighbouring tree, and the occasional yelping howl of the sleepless coyoté.

The morning did not bring much comfort. Stiff and sore, I felt more hopelessly unable to move than before. Reflecting upon every chance of deliverance, I saw more and more clearly that assistance was not to be hoped for. There were a thousand chances against my horse ever being seen by a white man. It was far more probable that he would fall into the hands of the Yuma Indians, who would quietly kill and eat him.

During the second day of misery my coyoté attendants were as attentive as a set of sordid

legatees; they were assisted by a few buzzards and crows, who also appeared to take a lively interest in my decline. However, as the day went on, hope revived in my heart. Perhaps it never had completely left me, even in the coldest and gloomiest hour of the night. The Indian savage never despairs under any circumstances, and the civilised man who leads the same free open air life soon arrives at the same happy condition of mind. This day was spent in the same manner as the day before. I was still almost unable to move, and felt above everything the tediousness of my condition. The quail now appeared tiresome, the coyotes were impertinent, the buzzards had been from the first disgusting, and I could not refrain from the hope, that if I was to perish by that well side, my obsequies would be enjoyed by so many beasts as to leave nothing upon a bone of me for those horrible birds.

But I did not think my case so desperate. Towards evening hope grew stronger. Finding that I could crawl a little, I collected all the dry wood that lay near and made a small fire. When I lay coiled by it, after the Indian fashion, the want of blankets was not so much felt. But the place had its inconvenience; for, during the night, I awoke with my clothes on fire, and had some trouble in extinguishing myself. By the fire-light, too, I then saw—or fancied that I saw—the horrible forms of scorpions and centipedes creeping about; so that on the whole I did not get my bed warmed without paying something for the luxury.

The third and fourth days of my crushed-worm state of existence, passed more hopefully yet. I found that I could walk a little with the assistance of two sticks, and I became confident that I should get out of the "fix" in safety. Twenty-five miles of sand were a long stretch for a cripple: still thefeat might be done on the tortoise system. The buzzards recognised the fact of my convalescence, and evidently viewed it with feelings of disgust. When they saw me moving about, they heavily flapped their wings, and by their departure gave me earnest of a good deliverance.

There is no more to be told, except that slowly, patiently, and with much suffering, I crept for my life across the five-and-twenty miles of desert, to that place of human luxury in which I found my truant horse. I began with the remark that I had had an unpleasant experience of nights spent in the boundless bed-chamber. On second thoughts, I don't know that they were not half enjoyed.

#### PERFUMES.

THE chief places for the growth of the sweet perfume-producing flowers are Montpellier, Grasse, Nismes, Savoy, Cannes, and Nice. Nice alone produces a harvest of a hundred thousand pounds of orange blossoms, and Cannes as much again, and of a finer odour. Five hundred pounds of orange blossoms yield about two pounds of pure Neroli oil. At Cannes the

acacia (*Acacia Farnesiana*) thrives particularly well, and produces yearly about nine thousand pounds of blossoms. One great perfumery distillery at Cannes uses yearly about one hundred and forty thousand pounds of orange blossoms, twenty thousand pounds of acacia flowers, a hundred and forty thousand pounds of rose-leaves, thirty-two thousand pounds of jessamine blossoms, twenty thousand pounds of violets, and eight thousand pounds of tuberose, together with a great many other sweet herbs. The extraction of ethereal oils, the small quantities of which are mixed in the flowers with such large quantities of other vegetable juices that it requires about six hundred pounds of rose-leaves to win one ounce of otto of roses, of course demands a very careful treatment.

Nice and Cannes are the paradise of violets, producing annually something like thirteen thousand pounds of blossoms. The variety cultivated is generally the double or Parma violet, which is so productive that the flowers are sold at about fivepence per pound; and we all know what sort of bouquet a pound of violets would make.

The abundance in Sicily of every flower which in our climate is most highly prized, recalls the traveller in the story, who arrived in a country where the children played at pitch-and-toss and marbles with diamonds, rubics, emeralds, and other precious gems. "These are, doubtless, the sons of some powerful king," he said, and bowed respectfully before them. The children, laughing, made him soon perceive that they were the street boys, and that the gems were only the pebbles of that country. In Sicily, the crimson grenade and rose-trees, the peach-coloured rhododendrons, and the delicate white camellias, form the country hedges. The white and green myrtles, and pink, white, and flame-shaped and flamed-coloured tulips, grow wild. When a pleasure-garden is made, the orange and lemon-trees are taken out, because they are too common. By the same rule, very few people trouble themselves with flowers: they are too vulgar. Alphonse Karr was much surprised to notice that the ladies of Nice never decorated themselves with real flowers, but seemed to dislike them. He observes this is all the more strange in a country where it is no longer a mythological flattery to say that flowers spring from under the ladies' feet. The roses, violets, jessamine, and mimosa, are cultivated only by the peasants for perfumery purposes, and honoured but as we honour potatoes or cabbages.

Alphonse Karr has thus described a sale of some jessamines at Nice. "The other day I saw two cultivators in a garden; one was buying of the other four thousand Spanish jessamine roots. I was not present at the struggle, but it must have been hot and passionate. When I arrived, the sale of the jessamines was concluded. The ordinary price of the Spanish jessamine is from three to five francs the hundred roots. These jessamines were splendidly loaded with large white flowers and pinkish

violet buds. The buyer took a pickaxe and uprooted them. I thought he was mad. For jessamines torn up in full flowering in the month of August, would in France be considered entirely lost, and fit only to be tied up in bundles for firewood. But this man, instead, carried his jessamines home, planted them in the ground, threw a few buckets of water over them, and left them to themselves. Three days afterwards I went to see them; they were in splendid condition, and had not ceased flowering."

We are now wholly dependent for our finest perfumes on France, so that when the crop of a flower fails, as did that of the jessamine last year, it will put the manufacturers to serious inconvenience. It would therefore be the interest of perfumers to promote the production of those flowers in other countries; and the high price they fetch in the market would make it a very profitable speculation. It has been proposed to cultivate flowers in England on a large scale for perfumery purposes, but the climate renders this scheme totally impracticable. For English flowers, however beautiful in form or colour, do not possess the intensity of odour required for extraction, and the greater part of those used in the south of France for perfumery would grow here only in hot-houses. The one flower which might be had in abundance would be the rose, but the smell of it is very faint compared with that of the Southern rose. Add to this the shortness of the flowering season, and the high price of land and labour, and it may be safely said that the cultivation in England of flowers for perfumery would prove as bad a speculation as attempting to make wine from English grapes.

A new process of extraction, patented by M. Piver, the eminent Paris perfumer, consists in forcing, by means of an air-pump, a strong current of air into a receiver filled with fresh flowers. The air-current then passes into a cylinder containing grease in a liquefied state, which is kept in constant motion by a series of disks revolving on an axis in the centre. The fragrant particles thus come in contact with a surface of grease, constantly renewed, which readily absorbs the greater part of them, and passing through a second cylinder in the same way, those that have escaped the first become fixed in the second, and let the air issue nearly scentless. In order to avoid all chance of waste, the same current of air is driven several times again through the flowers until it has exhausted all their perfume. The force of this current of air is such that, although the flowers are put in perfectly dry, it drives a considerable quantity of water out of them, which is collected in a receiver at the side of the apparatus. This water, which is quite a new product, possesses the pure scent of the flower in the highest degree.

The most widely-known of the toilet waters having an alcoholic basis is the eau-de-Cologne, invented in the last century by an apothecary in Cologne. It can, however, be made just as well anywhere else, as all the materials come from

the south of France and Italy. Its perfume consists principally of the flowers, leaves, and rind of the fruit of the bitter orange-tree.

### THE MOUNTGARRET ROMANCE.

THE romantic ring of some titles in the peerage of Ireland has often caused amusement; and it has been insinuated that, in the family committee of the whole house which is supposed to assemble to select a title, much assistance has been derived from the nomenclature of Minerva Press novels and highly strung *Della Cruscan* romances. In this way only, can we reasonably account (it is urged) for the chevaleresque magnificence of Guillamore, De Vesci, Clamvilliam, Belmore, Valentia, and Clarina. Other titles, by a sort of brand or prefix of "Mount," betray a suspicious connexion with that bargain and sale known as the Union, and raise the ghost of

Lord Mount Coffeehouse, the Irish Peer, Who killed himself for love—with wine—last year. Now, the Mountgarrets were not blood relations, or any relations, of the Irish peer who killed himself for love with wine last year. But it must have been a thunderclap for the head of that house when his daily post-bag disgorged a letter which warned him that he must do battle for his rights, for his peerage, castle, lands, tenements, and hereditaments. For, there were parties taking the regular steps to eject him according to the forms of law, and eject him as a false and illegitimate usurper. Most likely came in the bag also, a blue-veined red-sealed lawyer's letter from the confidential man of business, stating how "he had accepted service," and obtained "time to plead," and how that from what he could make out there was a very strong and ugly case on the other side.

The result seemed doubtful. It was said that the present peer's father had been first married in a secret and irregular fashion, according to the loose Scottish canons, and had since wedded, according to more orthodox rites, the mother of the present peer; but unhappily before the death of the first wife. The plaintiff was a cousin, son to a brother of this supposed noble bigamist, and, on proof of the illegitimacy of the present noble incumbent, the heir-at-law. Things looked grave.

By-and-by, when assize time came round, the little country town of Kilkenny, which was selected as the battle-ground, became filled with the usual gipsy miscellany which waits on solemn jail deliveries. The peripatetic judges had been "brought in" with all the shabby majesty of hired horses and bailiffs disguised in livery, and a solitary bugler winding *Io Pæan* in the shape of a feeble national anthem. The wandering bar, the legal Zingari, now on the tramp from town to town, were dropping in spasmodically. The inns were filled with a loose jumble of grand jurymen, witnesses, farmers, and attorneys, dashed with a sort of

commercial cayenne known as gentlemen of the bag. The little town—in its ordinary shape somewhat mean and stagnant in temperament—was in a manner glorified; its resources were strained and dislocated. There were foreign and outlandish tongues heard in its streets, and it was rumoured among those who gossiped in frieze coats that there were strange gentlemen, skilled in the law, and speaking with a Scottish brogue, billeted in lodgings; nay, for that matter, there were great counsels, arch big-wigs, huge thunderers—not belonging to that regular beat—who had been “brought down special.” The tenements where these awful auxiliaries descended to lay their heads, could also be pointed out, but with a sense of mystery; and people were taken to see the residence where the foreign witnesses were detained with jealous precaution in a sort of honourable captivity. Above all, it was rife among the gaping multitude that some monster mortars, forensic huge legal artillery, which on the morrow would crash and scatter destruction, had been brought down. One was named Brightside.

The story unwound during the next few days is more romantic than any authorised romance. There is a beautiful lady in the centre; not one of the passive smooth waters concerning whom there is unaccountable ferment, but a dazzling sparkling creature, with a conscious or unconscious power, that reached almost to the demoniac, of working mischief. She was left a widow, and a very youthful widow, by a rich Scottish officer of the name of Colebrooke, and then she began to work her spells and enchantments. A confidential maid described her, soberly and temperately, as “a very pretty little woman, very good manners, very well educated.” But by a lover was she thus rapturously construed: “The most beautiful creature in Edinburgh, and the handsomest I ever saw; not in my opinion only, but in that of every person.”

The scene throughout was at Edinburgh, in the high days of its fame and reputation. It was about the year eighteen hundred and ten; and Edinburgh then teemed with brilliant professors in all the sciences, to sit at whose feet the world sent all its growing-up sons. And there was choice society in the city, sprinkled with wit and elegance, by which the student with decent introduction might profit. In this moved a certain Professor Jeffrey and one Horner, and a clergyman of the name of Sydney Smith, together with notorious lecturers, called Dugald Stewart and Dr. Reid, and others with whom we have now a certain familiarity.

In the very heart of this society moved Mrs. Satanella Colebrooke, keeping up an establishment of horses, and carriages, and retainers, including the confidential maid to whom she appeared as a “pretty little woman.” Confidential maid’s name was Stride. Mrs. Colebrooke had her two daughters with her, who were “wards of Chancery,” and for them she was supplied a maintenance of some five hundred a year, besides a handsome jointure of her own.

A little before this time, the Honourable Henry

Butler had been wandering about places of fashionable resort, as many noble Irishmen of that day did—possibly in the capacity of a nomadic *Cœlebs*, seeking that pearl of inestimable price, an heiress. In his wanderings he looked in on a place then known as Brightelmstone, but which, later, became more manageable in the matter of pronunciation as Brighton, and there he became enthralled by this fatal Satanella. It is to be feared that the friendship between the two was of a warmer character than the stricter canons of society would now countenance. But the elegant society of those days, taking its tone from a model known as the First Gentleman in Europe, did not too nicely regard little failings.

Then came a shifting to Sloane-street, London, to a mansion in Cadogan-place; there, were horses, carriages, retainers, and confidential maid Stride; the two young ladies, wards of Chancery; and the Honourable Henry still hanging on in a dubious and suspicious capacity, letting himself in and out privately. Presently the scene is at Edinburgh, back again in the intellectual society; but another Irish *Cœlebs* has stepped upon the stage. “A gentlemanly little man—a very pretty gentleman—more the features of a lady than a gentleman”—a sort of *preux chevalier*, of elegant tastes and very popular. He was Mr. Taaffe, of Smarmore Castle, county Louth, and heir to some five thousand a year. He, too, had been drawn to Modern Athens by the attraction of its intellectual society; and, as he says himself, principally to make the acquaintance of Mr. Jeffrey and Sir Walter Scott. He wished, also, to attend the lectures of Dugald Stewart, and of the famous chemist Hope. This gentleman would appear to have been a man of tastes and accomplishments.

It came to pass that at a particular Edinburgh evening party Mr. Taaffe was introduced to Mrs. Satanella Colebrooke. The result was a deep impression on both sides. The pretty little gentleman with the lady’s face, found favour in Satanella’s eyes, and a few days after the party, Mr. Fortescue, another Irish knight upon his travels, stopped his horse in the street to give him a message from the fascinating lady. The result was a fiery attachment; in the thick of which, it may be a curious subject of speculation how it fared with Professors Dugald Stewart and Hope.

Act the second. After some months of this agreeable medley of love, science, and society, Nemesis steps on from the side scene. One evening, far in the night, a violent knocking is heard at the door, together with furious declamation and angry parley; and it is understood that the Honourable Butler has arrived, is below, and is anxious to be placed on his former footing. This inopportune appearance of the Honourable Butler is the more embarrassing, as his successor is actually on the premises. However, imperative orders are sent down, and the Honourable Butler is sternly refused admittance. Lover the second is thus delivered from a rather awkward ren-

contre. But later on in the night comes a yet more violent disturbance, and it is now discovered that, in spite of all precaution, the Honourable Butler has succeeded in scaling the back wall, and is actually in the hall, creating a fearful uproar. Lover the second is locked into an upper room, while Satanella herself descends fearlessly to beard the Honourable Butler in the hall. Lover the second, who knows nothing of what is going forward, continues ringing the bells of his upper chamber frantically; in the hope of attracting the attention of persons in the street. Then follows this extraordinary dénouement :

Stride meets the intruding Butler at the top of the stairs, and asks him how he dared to break in. He replies, with a ready effrontery, that it is his house and his wife, and keep him out nobody shall! To them in altercation enters Satanella, robed in white, and encounters the midnight disturber. The two, strange to say, are seen to pass up-stairs to a little room, and fade out of sight. In a few moments all is calm, and then, wonderful to relate! word is passed below for all hands, including discordant Stride, to come aloft to the little chamber. Thereupon, enter coachman, footman, butler, housemaids, the whole retainers, wondering exceedingly what this should mean. And behold, standing together on the rug, their mistress and the Honourable Butler! She then addresses them, and declares to them that Mr. Butler wishes them to be informed that he and she are man and wife: which declaration, according to the Scottish laws, would seem to be sufficient for a marriage. On the receipt of which extraordinary piece of news, the domestics retire, again wondering; and the Honourable Butler, apparently quite satisfied, departeth peacefully.

The other lover was in the mean time released from his inglorious captivity, and smuggled away by the discreet Stride; but he returned by-and-by, attended by Captain Pollock, Mr. Charles Stanley, and a strong party of friends, who were gallant enough to remain on duty the whole night for the protection of the lady.

After this date, the fortunes of the lovers fluctuated with an extraordinary impartiality. The ceremonial in the upper chamber, although a little irregular, would appear to have given the Honourable Butler a reasonable title to some preference; and this would seem to have been the juster view that at first prevailed in the mind of Satanella; for we find the two departing with a full train of attendants, carriages and horses, and the Honourable Butler seated in a domestic manner on the box.

Yet, shortly after, we find Mrs. Colebrooke and Mr. Taaffe creeping down, disguised, and, under circumstances of romance, to get on board the Berwick smack. Finally, after much mysterious peregrination, Mr. Taaffe and Mrs. Colebrooke, in spite of the strong claims of that Scottish ceremonial, are united in loyal matrimony at Preston. There the piece ought to have ended, with a valedictory "They lived happily together for ever after," the rather, as

the Honourable Butler witnessed this proceeding, so much to his own prejudice, with a strange acquiescence. But the pair did *not* live happily together for ever after. It was said that the little gentleman with the womanish face did not treat the beautiful lady handsomely. It was known that she was overwhelmed by debts, and that any husband of respectable means would be cast to creditors to be devoured. So Taaffe's parent—far away at Smarmore Castle, in the pleasant pastures of Louth—resolves to be cruel, but wise; and, taking the disinheriting knife in his hand, cuts Taaffe off without a moment's hesitation. Away go the fine castle, the gentle pastures, and that five thousand a year! Naturally enough, this element does not sweeten the nuptial nectar. By-and-by symptoms of insanity develop themselves in the beautiful lady, and we obtain a glimpse of a strange scene. The disinherited husband lying dozing on a sofa, and the distraught lady approaching him on tiptoe with an open razor in her hand! Then follow restraint, legal compulsion, and final separation; and, at the end of all, poor Satanella, grown worn and faded, sinks into poverty, and expires in the arms of the faithful Stride. So ends her share in the history.

Very much further on, years later, one of the twin heroes of these adventures turns up again in Italy. The "disinherited knight" is very much with my Lord Byron and his merry men, at Pisa and Genoa, and is enthusiastic almost to ferocity about a fresh object of affection! This new flame was, however, no creature in earthly mould, but a literary *inamorata*, a translation of the famous Dante, with a commentary annexed. The noble peer, his friend, found time to write home pressing letters to Mr. Murray, trying to stimulate him into undertaking the business. He pleads, too, with Mr. Moore. The commentary on Dante is "excellent," but the verse "is such as it has pleased God to endue him withal; nevertheless, he is so firmly persuaded of its equal excellence, that he won't divorce the comment from the traduction, as I ventured delicately to hint, not having the fear of Ireland before my eyes, and upon the presumption of having *shotten* very well in his presence the day before." The eagerness of the young knight of the Edinburgh parties to plunge into the black *Pactolus* of printer's ink, is very comical. "He is eager to publish all, and must be gratified, though the reviewers will make him suffer more tortures than are in his original. Indeed, the notes are well worth publication, but he insists upon the translation for company, so they will come out together, like Lady C—t chaperoning Miss \* \* \*. Now, what shall we do for him?" Then the noble friend proposes adroit intercession with the terrible reviewers Jeffrey and Giffard to allow him to pass by unnoticed—a most comic test of his opinion of the book. Perhaps the comment might be noticed "without touching the text; but I doubt the dogs—the text is too tempting." We have another glimpse of him, riding out furiously at Pisa with his noble friend and Cap-

tain Medwin, and at a sharp turn getting a severe fall, which is, as usual, placed in the most comic light by his noble friend. He makes one more appearance does this Irish Quixote, who lost five thousand a year for love. As the Mountgarret trial drew on in the year 'fifty-four, a commissioner and two barristers, with their bags, set off for Italy, struggling painfully over mountains and through defiles, to reach a strangely barren spot on the Adriatic, called Fano. There, was found a grey-haired gentleman in a ripe old age, who had retired to this solitary spot; and sitting down before him—the commissioner in the middle, and the barristers at opposite sides—they proceeded to extract from him, by way of examination and cross-examination, the facts of his life that have just been detailed.

At the trial, the faithful Stride was discredited in that story of the calling up of the servants and the proclaiming of the Honourable Butler as husband; so the jury "brought a verdict home" for the defendant, and Viscount Mountgarret keeps his coronet steady on his head.

#### FARMER PINCHER'S RATS.

It was all a false report about the Golden Age having departed from the land; it still flourishes, as it always did, away there in Downshire.

I am just returned from a visit to old Farmer Debenham, who lives in a little sunny village about thirty miles, more or less, from Shaftesbury, and in the centre of the Blackmoor Vale country.

The first glimpse I caught of Stoneton was on suddenly emerging from a deep dell, banked with fern and white with bindweed-bells, among which the nightingale sang all to itself (practising, I suppose) even at noonday, in the season of its singing-time. But now was harvest-time, and there was no sound in the dell but the sullen bees, honey-gathering in the wild geraniums. From the green darkness of this deep-sunk lane, I emerged as from a telescope-tube into a broad panoramic plain with some thirty miles of horizon. Those hills there, of a cloudy blue, reach out towards the sea; that little fume of smoke, boiling up there like the mere smoke of a pic-nic fire, is the smoke of one of the chief Dorsetshire towns; and yonder I see Dorchester. In the foreground, the long lines of trees stretch like regiments; and as for the hedges, they look like ranks of skirmishers thrown out before the main army.

Stoneton is but a small place, but the cottages are all of stone, and the windows are wide and mullioned. There, is the rector's, with the pleasant garden round it, and the standard roses shaking in the wind. That squat blind Norman tower is the church, with its daily congregation of martens, who build in every cranny and corbel.

Farmer Debenham's house has not sacrificed much to the Graces; utility, and not beauty, is the household god of the Debenhams. The

stacks are square and clean cut, as so many tin loaves; but the garden is slovenly and neglected. The thrashing-machine is covered up as trim as if it were a new barouche; but the vine gads over the house, with the most spendthrift wantonness, reaching its curling tendrils in at the windows, and thrusting the fruit prodigally into your hands. The hollyhocks, too, thrust up their staves of rosette flowers with an almost Indian luxuriance, while the roses wrap the old house now in one great crimson-scented robe: so that it looks quite regal in its old age, and faces the sun with a rustic pride as of one new come to power.

But what I meant about the Golden Age was this: I meant that the manners and social customs of Farmer Debenham and his family are as pure, simple, and unsophisticated as were the manners of people in Shakespeare's time. There is no luxury or corruption entered Farmer Debenham's house; no late hours, or debilitating sauces, or niminy-piminy pretence for him or his; no make-believe parties given to people whom you don't want to see, and accepted by people who don't want to see you; no empty expense on turtle and venison, and after-repentance on boiled neck of mutton and suet-pudding. No, Farmer Debenham, though he is not the least aware of it, lives a stern, hard life. He rises at five—four in summer—lunches at ten, dines at half-past twelve. I hear him up, in my dreams. In my midnight, in the soft warmth of my first sleep, I hear him knocking the tables and chairs together, which he calls being "about betimes." As the farmer is up at four, and then always finds the floor washed and the table set, and as the wife and daughters are yet rosy and well-looking, and evidently have no stint of healthy sleep, I begin to conjecture that somebody stops up at night and cleans everything all trim and snug when we are gone to bed—not that there is any noise, no, not to fray a mouse. As for going to bed, everybody is turned in and asleep by nine; no one abroad but the crickets, the rats, and outside the window the "flitter mice."

And that reminds me of the rats, the real staple of my story; but first let me dismiss the Debenhams, father and sons. They are frank as sailors, honest, sturdy, stolid, obstinate, and, intellectually, perhaps, rather heavy. They are dark-red and brown-red, according as they are old or young. They are proud of Dorsetshire, and they like the condition to which they were born. There are four sons, and each has his special duties, which he performs with military discipline. Father goes to market, buys and sells; Jack, the eldest son, looks after the home farm; Tom, the second, attends to the labourers, starts them and keeps them going; Bill sees to the thrashing, the horses, and the in-door work; Joe, the youngest, has a playful existence, sees to the cows, shoots the rats, and kills rabbits and trout for family consumption. As to Mrs. Debenham and daughters, they have quite enough to do with the dairy and the poultry. The piano gets mouldy in the house of the Debenhams;

but the milk-pans are as clean as snow, and the glass bowls as bright as silver.

Now, for the rats. Farmer Debenham, you must know, is only a new comer to Stoneton; his hereditary farm is in Wiltshire, "down away at Cropmore," which he left because the landlord was hard about the repairs, and would not do the place up at all. The tenant he succeeded was Farmer Pincher, who made a fortune in the good old hard times, when the poor people had some of them to live on grains, and working men got meat once a week, and then not too much of it. He was a wonder of eccentricity even in this country of individualised and eccentric people. He had grown very rich, and one year his brother farmers at market began to tease him about four very old wheat-stacks that stood round his farm-yard at Stoneton. He was a sullen obstinate man. It is supposed that he swore them and there, in presence of them all, that he wouldn't thrash them out for the next ten years; but of course no one knew the terms of his oath, because he made it secretly and silently. Years went on, and the stacks sank and dwindled. They were pierced, like colanders, with rat-holes; the thatch rotted; weeds branched out on them; they became no longer great loose hills of golden grain, large as small houses, but mere black clotted sops of spoiled grain; what once had been worth pounds was now worth only pence; the poor people in severe winters, or in bad corn years, groaned at the wickedness of letting food perish, from sheer wicked obstinacy; but nothing could move Farmer Pincher. He would reply nothing to any inquiry about the stacks, but only growled, and walked away. He chose it; it was his corn; it gave him a wicked pleasure to show, visibly, how he could afford to waste money; every day he passed them, he felt that he was revenged. They were the inn talk, the fireside talk, the cover-side talk, the sportsmen's talk, were Pincher's wheat-stacks. How rich and dogged the man must have been, who, let corn rise as it would, would die rather than touch his four black stacks! I believe that man was such a flint-and-iron pagan, that he would have been cut into ounce pieces rather than have thrashed those stacks until the time of his oath had expired.

But, when Farmer Debenham came, it was necessary that Pincher should either thrash or destroy the four black stacks. And at last he sullenly named a day for thrashing them.

"Begin and thrash those four old stacks on Monday," was all he said. No joke, taunt, or side-wind, could touch him. He said no more about it. The same Monday, early, suddenly, without wishing any old friend good-by, he and his bad-tempered dog (who had tasted nearly every boy's leg in the village) departed, with no old shoes to celebrate their departure.

This Monday was the day on which I got to Stoneton, and great was the excitement there. The black ricks had for years brought the curse of rats upon the village. Squire Harker's game-keepers, with their game-preserving, had ren-

dered the curse still more intolerable by killing all weasels, ravens, stoats, hawks, owls, carrion-crows, kites, polecats, and other creatures, that live mainly on rats and mice, and such "small deer;" the rats, first filling the stacks, had then, overflowing from them, burst like an inundation over the whole village. The poor people's bacon and best clothes had been gnawed away; the farmers' ducklings and chickens went off in broods; the rats got into cupboards, presses, drawers, boxes, lofts, preserve-rooms, stables; got everywhere, and spoilt and devoured everything.

If the rats were unbearable, living, they were insupportable, dead; for the sanitary principles of extramural interment seemed grossly disregarded by them, and they always contrived to die in dining-rooms or under the floor of bed-rooms, in studies, or under drawing-room sofas. The noise, too! At night they were like burglars, ghosts, rioters, and election mobs. I could hear them drag weights about, chains about, chairs about, and they were so violent that nothing but knocking a nail into the wainscot over the place stopped them. They fell down the kitchen chimney; they bit the cook's legs and the gardener's fingers; they left their limbs in the traps, and were found calmly drowned in the milkpans. I am quite sure that if Moses had only tried the plague of rats, that stubborn Pharaoh would have let the Israelites go wherever and whenever they liked. They were such big rats, too, with sloughing tails, yellow teeth, naked feet, and eyes out of an undying and changeless malice stared with cold cruelty.

Nothing stopped them, Farmer Debenham said. Tar? Lord bless you, no. Broken glass? Not a bit of it; arsenic they seemed to rather like—a few died puffed out, or drank and burst; the rest got wiser, avoided arsenic, and grew more violent than ever. They gnawed the corks in the cellar and they drank the wine; they ate the potatoes, and they gnawed the game in the larder. Life in Stoneton was no longer a pleasure, and all owing to Farmer Pincher's droves of rats.

The most extraordinary stories were told of them. They were said to be met at night, going down in long files to the ponds to drink; and among them were often found some almost nude of hair—it was supposed from extreme old age. What a rat purgatory for the Debenhams; but, for a Chinaman, what a paradise, was Stoneton!

I remember them at night, in Pincher's time, when I was down staying with my friend the rector; sometimes they had a Derby Day, sometimes a congress, now and then a single combat. It entirely explained to me the origin of ghosts, and of all mysterious noises and haunted houses.

As for the stacks, they had (at the time when Pincher left) become quite serious; they swarmed, they heaved, they almost walked, with rats—in the midst of which lived, it was reported, one or two tax-collecting weasels, who led the life of sultans. If you went at dusk

and put your ear to the stacks, you could hear a fighting and a stir, as if they were hives in full work. Each stack was one vast nation of robber rats, crowded together as in a huge fortress, ready to sack and devastate the surrounding country. Nor were the stacks their only barracks; all the hedge-rows round, were honeycombed and catacombed with their runs, in some places the very fields were undermined with their burrows. And all this vexation and mischief sprang from the wicked obstinacy of one selfish man.

Farmer Debenham was in despair. He saw no way to profits for a year or two, if this torrent of vermin life were annually to sweep over his barns and rick-yards. In vain he strewed layers of corn, and slew twenty rats at a time with a duck gun; in vain, at dusk, Joe, the rat-killer, slew them in pig-troughs, on walls, and on sloping thatches; they seemed to increase the more. No, there must be a great razzia and an universal slaughter, and not a she rat or a ratling must be spared.

The day fixed for the great raticide was the day after I arrived, when the full thrashing was to begin. The day of my arrival was spent in pitching double rabbit nets, three feet high, all round each stack: in cutting bludgeons, and collecting dogs. That same night, too, at dusk, the steam thrashing-machine arrived, 'drawn by three horses—a great black iron monster, covered with tarpaulin as carefully as if it were the wooden horse about to enter Troy.

That night we all dreamed of rats. I swam in rats, ate rats, fought with rats, rode over rats, shot into them, slashed them, crushed them, first *wrote* and then *read* to them, TALKED to them. About daybreak we began.

Debenham and his sons were on guard round stack No. 1, armed with long bludgeons, hurdle-poles, and pitchforks; each held an impatient and fretful terrier, struggling in the leash. There were a whole field full of children, anxious and wondering; there were cynical gamekeepers and young farmers, who had come to the Debenhams from sympathy or from sheer love of the sport.

Behind all these, like a burning Moloch of insatiable appetite, and the vigour of forty Herculeses, puffed and champed the steam thrashing-machine: its jaws breathing fire and black smoke, its arms and claws toiling with a supernatural absence of fatigue. A mixture of stoker and farm labourer looked to its fires, or from time to time rubbed some favourite brass cog or plug with a black oily rag, like a dirty Vulcan who had broken out for a holiday into the fields.

A pleasant clack of voices arose. Debenham, in pure Dorsetshire, urged his men to work, in a short but telling speech, with a glance at certain oozy kegs that lay wallowing in the hedge under some flowering nettles, and near some sturdy and odorous fustian jackets that retained the shape and manner of their wearers. The children lay in circles, pulling at gilt buttercups, or playing with a barking toothless dog, too old to kill rats, but not too old to bark and look on, and encourage its younger brethren.

Now, the men with poles look staunch, relentless, and bloodthirsty, for the work of death begins. The men, dark against the rosy day-break, remove the thatch carefully, as you would "prize" the crust off a pie, and fling down the first pitchforkfuls of tubular straw to the "groomers" and binders below. They are knee deep in the loose wheat.

What is that living lump of black that topples down, picks itself up, and then hops off in such a ludicrous panic? That's a rat—first rat! "At him, dogs!" "Tear him, dogs!" "Go it, dogs!" "Hold him, dogs!" "Worry him, dogs!" But no. "Mr. Rat" lays sharp hold on an uninitiated dog's soft black nose, and there he hangs, let the dog shake ever so wildly.

But at length beaten off by the dog, he falls on the ground, and is there quickly done to death by Joe's deft bludgeon. First blood to Joe! The first rat of some ten thousand rats has fallen by Joe's puissant arm.

Now, from various sally-ports, crafty cautious rats hop and bolt suddenly, hoping to elude their watchful and relentless enemies by the unexpectedness of their exit. Sometimes they escape the mauling shower of sticks, and tumble hopelessly against the netting—but only there to be snapped by the red jaws of the terriers, or to be struck with the javelin pitchfork. All ages of rats are there, from the swollen patriarch and bald sore beggar rat, to the mere stripling rat, and the mere naked shrimp rat of some six hours. Our war was a relentless one, and we gave no quarter. Our peace had been disturbed, and now revenge was sweet to us. It was war to the knife—a war of extermination. Old rats, lean rats, fat rats, young rats, meek rats, blind rats, spiteful rats, cantankerous rats that fought in corners and defied dogs and sticks, rats that ran for help into the very pockets and bosoms of the women and children spectators, rats that threw themselves from the roof of the stacks, rats that ran suddenly from the bottom, rats that hid themselves, rats that bravely faced sunshine and glittering steel; rats that appeared at the mouths of holes in the straw, looked round as if to see how the weather was, did not like the look of things, and turned in again; rats of every kidney, of all complexions, and of every age, were run down and slain, with sudden shouts, sudden runnings together, crushing blows of sticks that seemed all in the air at one time, like the daggers that slew Cesar.

And all this time the great engine, fed with great feeds of grain, devoured its endless meals, and breathed forth its great black banner of smoke. The men who fed it, talked with angry loudness, for the noise of the machinery erased all ordinary voices; far away on the other side, in a snug corner, beaten down among the nettles, close to the great red-tinged heap of dead rats, sat a small jury of village children—small children nursing babies, so large in proportion that they nearly tumbled over with top-heaviness; rustic boys, with large shapeless hats, battered cruelly-used trunks of

dolls, toy-carts without wheels; one or two boy younglings who swung about by the tail, small rats that served as playthings, not being much larger than the horses in a Noah's Ark; the larger rats being, I observed, in the sudden quarrels that occur among children, sometimes used as missiles.

Every now and then, there was a warlike episode, produced by Joe's dog leaping savagely at an intrusive terrier from a neighbouring village, who had seized a rat not properly in his special province. Tremendous, then, was the rush of the men; tremendous the tearing and rending of the snapping and growling dogs; lithé and wonderful the twists and turns. The pitchforks worked deftly, tossing off layer after layer and ledge after ledge of straw; and always, as the straw was lifted and shook loose and light, down showered and tumbled rats, like so much rolling black fruit. The satiated dogs cared only to gripe and kill the rats at a bite; they had no spirit for protracted worrying now; and all this time the mountain of rats widened and grew higher.

It may be true that rats leave a leaky vessel as soon as they can, for the oozing in of the water may drive them out of their holes; but rats in a stack will not leave it till they are obliged; they creep, and sink, and get to the bottom, and there remain huddled together in a spiteful snapping frightened mass, till the men almost reach to them, and then the rats run for it, like so many detected conspirators.

Some tons of rats lie dead in the sun, and already the bright buzzing blue blowflies are busy at their eyes. Barrow-loads of rats are ready to manure the wheat-fields they once invaded.

The casualties on our side have not been numerous. Joe has hit Tom a tremendous blow on the shin with a hedge-stake in trying to fell a rat; Bill has been bitten by a rat; and old Farmer Debenham by an impatient dog he tried to drag home. Every one has stories to tell of his own special prowess; how he took a boar-rat of enormous size by the tail, and beat his brains out against a wall; how he sprang on four rats, and struck them dead with four successive well-aimed blows; how he caught a rat on his pitchfork as he fell from the stack; and so on, after the manner of old soldiers at the bivouac-fire.

Now, Farmer Debenham talks blithely of bread and meat, beer and perry, to be met with at home by all who have killed more than ten rats. Everybody immediately puts in a claim to have killed more; the bolder spirits claim to have killed scores; the milder, rest content with one score—fifteen—twelve—eleven—anything over ten. The stalwart work is over; the great steam-engine stops its tremendous attempt to puff itself into public notice; the sacks of hard yellow grain are lolling in the waggon; the engine has put on his great black tarpaulin dreadnought; the waggons roll and jingle homeward; the red bludgeons are tossed into the waggons; some corrosive lime is strewn over the

rat-mountain, so that it now looks like an enormous country pie waiting only for the upper crust; the cowboy blows his horn to call in loiterers; and home we go to a merry-making supper.

### LOVE IN KENTUCKY.

WAITING for clients is not the most agreeable employment in life. If you have a good digestion you can take your quantum suff. of Clitty and Smith's leading cases, with an occasional quid of Coke upon Littleton; and, having read yourself into a state of torpor, you can take a walk or a gallop on horseback; or, if disposed to waste your time, you can do so by devoting an hour to some pretty maid or charming widow, taking care not to commit yourself unnecessarily. In this way I worried through my first year in Barrington, a large town in Kentucky, where I chanced to settle. For the first week, I turned my head sharply when the door of my office opened, expecting to see a client. My nerves had ample time to become tranquil, however, and after a few months I was so accustomed to solitude, that I should have regarded an actual litigant, fee in hand, as a being for whom the sexton would presently come with a habeas corpus. The only person who commiserated me was the faithful Jake, who attended to my rooms. Being naturally social, he thought a man shut up at work all day, the most wretched of creatures.

"Massa Bill" (African for William Tompkins, attorney and counsellor), "seems to me you powerful lonesome here in Barrington. Little white, too, 'bout de chops." (I had not then the handsomely grizzled beard which now adorns the lower part of my face.) "Lor, don't I wish you knew my old massa Barr'l [Barwell]. Jest to be dar 'bout hog-killin' time, scare up a fox or two at night, drive a deer down from the knobs in de mornin', den cavort roun' de country on horseback, see turkey-shootin', an' de scrub races, an', maybe, do a little courtin' when it come handy."

It was a tempting picture which Jake presented. I did know his master, though not intimately. I meditated.

"I should like to have a crack at a deer, Jake."

"Gor-a-mighty, massa, I'se nigger, and some folks tink dey don't know nothin'. But let Jake alone. I go Sunday to Massa Barr'l's, caze ole Sally she looks for me. Hi! Chasin' arter the dogs at sun-up through the black-jacks\* is better 'n loafin' in dis dead-an'-live town."

It was Saturday; that night, armed with a pass against molestation by the patrol, Jake went home. I thought no more of the hunting, but amused myself next day as well as I could, making a synopsis of Brother Banger's sermon. I had many times wandered after him through the tangled shrubbery of his periods, but I

\* The black-jack is a species of stunted oak, abounding in Southern Kentucky.

thought I would this time set down logically his premises, major and minor, with the conclusions, mathematically speaking, to reduce his vulgar fractions, with swelling denominators, to lowest terms. But did you ever wait for the settling of the froth of new ale?

I have heard some startling sermons in my time. Think of a man with cropped hair, groveling look, *no* manners, the action of a wood-sawyer, and the tone of a bull, getting up, pulling his coat off, loosening his cravat, and then "going in" after this fashion: "Brethren an' sister'n, I'm all the way from *Indianny*—ah, where I left my wife'n six children—ah, to come over here an' preach to you the *Gospel*—ah! I ain't got no larnin', an' I don't want any. I'm proud to be as ign'rant as my lord an' master—ah, an' his disciples an' apostles—ah! If God wanted me to have larnin'—ah, he'd a gin me larnin'." And so on for an hour. I [William Tompkins, counsellor, &c.] am ready to make affidavit having heard this exercise—the *ahs* exploded like a lumberer's when felling an oak—one fine day in the woods, where, from a safe distance on horseback, I beheld the motley crowd that gathers on such occasions.

I do not believe, however, the story which my friend James tells of a young preacher, who, in the midst of the long prayer before sermon, casting his eye furtively upon his watch on the pulpit-cushion, and seeing that a considerable portion of the customary fifteen minutes remained to be filled, went through every form of petition he had ever heard, including the restoration of the Jews to Palestine and the coming of the millennium; and at last, thinking of an expedient which had sometimes served him in eking out an unsatisfactory exhortation, exclaimed, "*And now, O Lord, I will relate an anecdote!*"

I repeat, I do not believe this story, although it has some features of probability.

To return. On Monday, Jake appeared with a knowing face. Presently, the cause of his knowing expression came out. Colonel Barwell called. It was county court day, when every farmer of substance (and some without) came to town to do business. The colonel was in many respects a very remarkable man. He was tall, six feet two, broad-shouldered, and not too corpulent. His leonine hair fell backward from a fair brow, while the lower part of his face was browned, and his solid chin thickly set with stumps of blue-black beard. A more commanding person one would seldom see. Two things you would be certain of: first, that Colonel Barwell had the most flourishing farm in the county; second, that his family (in his own opinion) was beyond comparison the first and bluest blooded that ever sprang from old Virginia. His courtesy was overwhelming in its stateliness. He had come to ask me to make him a visit. Jake's intervention was politely kept in the background. His daughter, attending school in Barrington, was going to return with him that day, having a vacation of a few weeks. My business was not troublesome, and

nothing stood in the way of acceptance. In the afternoon, Colonel Barwell called for me, and, having mounted our horses, we rode to the seminary. The daughter was already at the door in a riding suit. A young fellow came out, and, as I thought, exchanged a significant glance with her. The colonel bent his scowling regards upon the youngster as he walked away, but neither spoke or recognised the other.

"Come, my daughter," said Colonel Barwell, "Jake is holding your horse."

As we rode away, I took my place at her right, being beckoned there by her father. It was really a new sensation to me, to come in contact with such a fresh and spontaneous nature. Very handsome, animated, vivacious, and natural. I really think she spoke just as she thought, and without a particle of policy or reserve. Nevertheless, she did not once allude to the youth who had departed with the reflexion of her smile on his face. And I suspected that her rapid and even brilliant talk was the result of effort.

In due time we traversed the sixteen miles which constituted our journey to Colonel Barwell's estate; our ride through the prairie land, covered here and there with stunted sorghy black-jacks, does not require any special mention. Neither shall I describe the house, the negro quarters, the kennels, and stables. Are there not tourists who do this? Nor shall I dwell upon the sumptuous entertainments, the old-fashioned Virginia dances, the morning rides, the exhilarating life in the open air, the freedom from restraint, which make a wealthy Kentucky farmer's house the most delightful place to visit in the (Western) world. Miss Celia was my constant companion, and Jake was our faithful squire. But I could not forget that youngster, and I felt sure that Miss Barwell did not forget him either. You can believe me. I am not the hero of my own story. The youth had been beforehand with me.

Jake, however, drew conclusions rapidly.

"Powerful good girl, Miss Cely; caze I knows her from a piccaninny. Carried her in my arms; reckon couldn't do it now, nohow." And Jake laughed, but continued. "Dere's ony two of 'em to sheer the property, Miss Cely an' Miss Anny; short division, hi! a mighty big farm an' lots o' niggers. Couldn't do better, noways. And, Massa Bill" [meaning me, William Tompkins] "I sh'd like to b'long to you, I should so."

I had not thought of making an investment in that species of live stock, but the frank avowal of confidence by Jake was a compliment to my good temper which I own was flattering. So I told him that if I were his owner I would not whip him more than once a week; at which he haw-hawed, and showed his vermillion gums again.

Nothing could be more touching than the pride and affection Colonel Barwell felt in his daughter. He watched her sparkling face at table, and followed her steps across the floor with all a father's fondness in his eyes. His wife was dead; he had no son; and his second daughter, Anne, was plainer, and of a quiet turn.

I remained a week, and the hunting was successful. On one occasion, Colonel Barwell gave a proof of his astonishing skill with the rifle. Jake had gone home, carrying the carcase of a buck, and the colonel and I sauntered through the woods. It was a heavy gun: not the one he used for birds and squirrels: but nothing escaped him. Squirrels, which I could not see, came tumbling down from the trees; partridges and quails dropped among the low bushes; in every case the ball touched only the head. "Do you never hit in the body?" I asked. "Never, in this kind of game. If I should kill a bird or squirrel with a ball in his crop, I should leave it in the bushes." I mentally determined not to become a target for Colonel Barwell, as long as there was any other for him to shoot at.

On the morning when I was to return home, my host expressed the customary satisfaction at the visit, in which I heartily joined; and he assured me that he would remember me in any legal business he might have.

Miss Celia (the prefix is universal in Kentucky) came to the stile, and kindly bade me good-by. *I afterwards* remembered that I saw her slip something into Jake's hand.

I resumed my former mode of life. A fortnight passed, when one evening, going to the hotel for tea, I heard that Colonel Barwell's daughter had eloped with young Manley—for a Gretna-green marriage in Tennessee, it was supposed—and that the father was in hot pursuit. Then, I remembered the letter given to Jake, and the significant glances between Miss Celia and the unknown young man. The news startled me. I saw once more, the spirited girl, full of enthusiasm and romantic nonsense, fancying herself a heroine. I saw the father, too, with his pride, self-will, and energy, thundering along in the track of the fugitives, I hardly knew whether to wish for their escape or no. I feared for the young man, howsoever it fell out.

And who was Manley? I asked a number of persons, each of whom answered after his own way of thinking. No one man can give a correct idea of another; by two or three observations, as in trigonometry, you can obtain the data and compute the elements.

Manley was the son of a waggon-maker in Barrington, "poor but honest" (as the damaging phrase is), who had brought up a numerous family, feared God, and obeyed the laws. The eldest son was of medium height, but looked puny beside the tall men who are reared in Kentucky. He was shapely and even graceful, but slender in figure and retiring in manner. While other young men hunted or revelled he read and studied, until his complexion became singularly delicate for that scorching climate. When he was described to me, I well remembered his large blue eyes, full of intelligence and sensibility, and so shy withal, that no one ever had more than a passing glance from them. This was the man, albeit so shrinking and feminine, who had fascinated the

stately and self-assured girl; this fellow, as timid as a deer with his horns in the velvet, had succeeded while a score of vigorous gallants were waiting for an opportunity!

Next day, towards evening, young Manley, with a companion named Cockburn, came back to Barrington without the young lady. As the town was full of a thousand flying stories about the elopement, the disappointed hero was overwhelmed with questions. This was the explanation:

Colonel Barwell had pushed on to the last inn on the border of Tennessee, and had there learned that the lovers had preceded him at least an hour, and that they were by that time, probably, man and wife. The innkeeper added, that he expected them to return and pass the night at his house. There was no alternative; the baffled father sent his foaming horse to the stable and waited for them.

Meanwhile, the fugitives found the magistrate who generally tied the hurried knots for couples from Kentucky; unfortunately, he had no blank licenses required by the law, and to serve the present purpose he took one which had been used: erasing the old names and filling in the new. The ceremony performed in this irregular way, the young couple returned in high spirits, and soon reached the inn. A bountiful supper awaited them, and, when it was finished, the bride was shown to her chamber, Miss Celia was humming a song as she opened the door, but the notes froze in her throat when the light she carried, fell upon the stern features of her father. He stood before her, just within the room; a thousand rebukes in his silent face.

"Father!" It was all she could say.

"Daughter!" And he stood with folded arms. "So, you ran away," he went on at length; "ran away, like one of the 'poor trash.' *My* daughter, who can marry whom she likes! I am not angry, but I am ashamed of you."

She did not speak. Proud and resolute as she was, she knew her master.

"Are you married?"

She bowed silently.

"According to law? Oh, you don't know! We'll see about that. Now, my daughter, you haven't but one life to live, and we can't have it wasted in experiments. When it is a proper time for you to marry, I shall allow you a free choice; but you are a foolish child now, and nothing more. You thought it would be funny or romantic to do this—as though it were something that could be undone! I shall take you home with me, and you can then reflect. I don't believe you will disgrace yourself by choosing any such low-flung people. But, first of all, whose notion was it, this running away, yours or his?"

"Mine," she answered, tremblingly. Perhaps not truly, for her father's eyes shone as he put the last question, and, knowing the violence of his wrath, she saw what a tempest was about to break on the unlucky bridegroom.

"I shall see you again presently," said the father. He walked to the door, and, taking the

key, went out and locked her in. He had not far to go. Manley had heard voices, and was coming up, when he encountered the man whom, of all men living, he dreaded to meet.

"Are you the fellow that has stolen my daughter?" asked the colonel. Now, whatever bravery Manley had, it did not nerve him to look calmly on threatening muzzles, or to be cheerful in anticipation of having his bones broken. He had a theoretical or sentimental courage, very well in its way, inasmuch as it has sustained some very trembling knees on their way to the stake; but it was not of the kind needful in a "scrimmage," when, after natural means are exhausted, the bowie-knife comes in to settle the affair. So Manley, feeling an uncertainty in his legs, and a prodigious thumping at his heart, answered, in words that seemed to have the palsy:

"Yes, sir—that is, I married her—by her consent. She was—not stolen."

"Oh! Not stolen. Now, sir, I want to know about the ceremony. Tell me what was done—all about it."

Mr. Manley was not a man with a legal education, or he would have known better than to admit away his case. In fact, he had a foolish sort of frankness that is highly commended in story-books, but is very bad policy, especially in dealing with an antagonist like Colonel Barwell. So, he told what had happened, not omitting the mending of the second-hand license. A gleam of delight lighted up the colonel's iron face when he heard that.

"Caught in your own trap, you fool!" he exclaimed. "The marriage is not legal; not worth so much as continental currency; void from the beginning. My daughter is not your wife. Go home, you fool! Perhaps you can make a waggon-wheel. Think yourself lucky that I leave you with a whole skin."

Manley was roused by the taunts, and said something about appealing to the daughter. The colonel unlocked the door, and, standing on the threshold to keep the unmarried couple apart, said:

"My daughter, you have been imposed upon, deceived, betrayed. The marriage was a sham; it gives you neither the rights nor the protection of a wife. Now go home with me. I only ask you to stay three weeks. If at the end of that time you wish to marry this man, you shall have an honourable wedding at my house. But I don't believe that, possessing your senses, you will ever marry such a mean-spirited fellow as he has shown himself."

Here Cockburn interrupted from the stairway. "If you are fool enough to agree to that, Manley, then you are a mean-spirited fellow, and you don't deserve to have her."

"Who is this pitching in with his cock-a-doodle-doo?" inquired the colonel. "Come here, you, if you want your comb cut." And he took out a keen, glittering bowie-knife, and felt the edge with his thumb. Manley could not repress a shudder as he saw this unconcerned handling of the fearful weapon. He spoke, however, more calmly than before.

"Cockburn, I don't want any blood shed on my account—your blood least of all. As I said before, I did not steal the young lady, and to prove that I have no wish to control her against her will, I will leave it for her to decide. If she loves me, she will not leave me for her father's threats. If we are not lawfully married, it will be easy to have the ceremony lawfully performed. I shall not answer Colonel Barwell's flings at my father's business. Some people, whom the world considers great, have not been ashamed of the labour of their hands. And there are many rich men whom I would not exchange places with, if I had to take their ignorance, their animal habits, and brutal temper."

A few minutes earlier, this retort would have cost the young man his life. As it was, Celia turned pale, while she watched the play of passion in her father's face. But he, feeling pretty sure of triumph, was willing to let the youth talk, and preferred on the whole not to have the trouble and scandal of a fight.

"Come, daughter, you have heard the young spark. He can talk, though he hasn't the pluck to do anything else." (Still feeling the edge of the knife, and showing his teeth to Manley with an expressive smile.) "Will you go home with me? I tell you in three weeks you shall have your choice."

She wavered. She looked towards her lover with tearful eyes. Perhaps one word from him would have brought her to his side. But that foolish uprightness of his, held him silent. He had said what he had to say. If she came to him, he thought, she must come of her own free will. He would not lift a finger, to induce her.

"Decide," said the colonel. "If you leave me, leave your name behind you; for I swear I will never own you, nor shall you ever have a crust from me to save you from starving!"

She moved a step towards her father. He opened his arms.

"Can you forgive me, George?" she said. "It is only for a little while. I swear I will never marry any one but you. But to please my father—and you know what he has promised—will you not let me go? Then we'll have a wedding, with our relations and friends. I can't bear to go off with father's curse on my head. Won't you forgive me, George? I will be true to you."

What the father thought, he kept in his own breast. He clasped his daughter in his arms and throwing a cold glance over his shoulder to Manley, said, with ironical courtesy, "You can go, young man. And you may as well order your horse to be fed for an early start."

"I am obliged to you," said Manley. "You can keep your advice for another. As for you, Celia, I must abide by your decision. Something within tells me that we part for ever. But the die is cast, by your hand. Farewell!"

Next day, Colonel Barwell and his daughter started homeward. Manley and Cockburn sat at the door, but no words were interchanged. An hour or two later the young men followed, reaching Barrington in the evening. The most

disappointed and enraged man of the party was Cockburn. Though less stalwart and muscular than the colonel, he was full of reckless impetuosity, and was keenly sensitive to the imputation of cowardice. It chafed him to see his friend's tame acquiescence in Colonel Barwell's insolent dictation, and he would have been glad to have a brush if his principal had shown the least disposition to sustain him.

"We shall be laughed out of the world for this," was his hundred-times repeated consolation to the downcast bridegroom on the way home. "Two young men, to let one old fellow bully them, ride over them roughshod, and carry off the girl when they had her sure! You and I could have chawed him up in three minutes."

"But he was too well armed."

"Never mind his butcher-knife! That isn't worth shucks when you close in. Give a regular bear's hug, and a man can't carve you up."

"But I don't want a fight."

"Then what on earth did you go in for? Don't grip with the devil unless you mean to use your nails. We go home like a couple of dogs with their tails between their legs. You can jump into Green River, or take lodgings in the Mammoth Cave, but you can't hold up your head in Barrington. What made you tell him about that license?"

"Why, you said it was legal."

"So I say now; the girl is your wife. But you might have kept your mouth shut."

The nearer they came to the town, the more the dread of ridicule weighed upon Cockburn. Again and again he repeated:

"We are disgraced—cowards like spaniels—not worth the powder to blow us up."

"Well, what could I have done?"

"Stood up for your rights, demanded your wife, showed fight. The old man wouldn't care to have a ball through his body any more than you or I. Besides, your wife had nobody to go to. You didn't show her that you would protect her, and so you made her give up to him."

"But it's over now, and I have agreed to wait three weeks."

"Don't be a spooney, and let the wool be pulled over your eyes in that way. I tell you she is your wife, and she showed her disposition plain enough. Go out to her father's place and take her!"

Poor Manley was in a sad dilemma. The shame and mortification of the affair were quite enough without the stinging taunts of his companion. He saw how he had been bullied and swindled, and, but for his word, he would have risked his life in the attempt to recover his bride. No man becomes so recklessly brave as a man of a delicate sensitive cowardly nature, stung into madness, or turned to bay in despair.

In every town of Kentucky there is a set of gentlemanly loafers, who in pleasant weather sit on chairs a-tilt at the street-corners under the trees, moving round with the shadow the whole day. When it is cool they congregate

in lawyers' offices, groceries, bar-rooms, the clerk's office, or wherever their company is welcome. Quids of tobacco and home-made cigars are their solace, whittling cedar-sticks is their ostensible employment, and telling stories and playing practical jokes their diversion. Woe to the unlucky wight whose shortcomings or mistakes bring him under their notice! Dante never dreamed of worse refinement of torture than they know how to apply. Their laughter is worse than a volley, their jibes are more to be dreaded than a thrust from a two-inch blade. It is useless for a man to say that he don't care. They give the cue to the town, and every face is wreathed in smiles, every finger is pointed, every voice says, "Aha!"

No man can face a whole community long. Into such a nest of hornets came Manley and Cockburn. Everywhere the ludicrous end of the elopement was the theme of jeering conversation. Verses were extemporised upon it, and were sung by all the idle rascals in town, black and white. Manley was treated to a mock serenade; horns were blown, kettles were beaten; one of the serenaders had a tame crow which cawed in concert; another led a venerable goat that bleated when his beard was pulled; for Manley, it was Pandemonium let loose. The company had thoughts of bestowing similar delicate attentions on Cockburn; but the more prudent remembered his revolver, and thought it best not to run the risk of being peppered.

Cockburn met Manley next day, and was surprised to see the change in his face. Though still pale and thin, his bloodless lips were sharply compressed, and his eyes, no longer humid and womanly, shone with a cold steady lustre.

"You see now," said Cockburn, "we might as well be in the infernal regions. Something must be done. We can't kill all these fellows; they are too many. You have nothing left but your choice between three things: to run away, cut your throat, or go and get your wife."

"I will go and get my wife!"

"Good!" exclaimed Cockburn. "I begin to believe in you."

Their plan was speedily arranged. Cockburn undertook to engage two or three men to accompany them. They thought the display of force would intimidate the colonel into submission.

Strange that any persons could have been found to go on so desperate an errand. Perhaps. But what enterprise, however foolhardy, has ever failed to draw followers from among the restless spirits of Kentucky? If Molino del Rey is to be stormed, Kentuckians are the first to scale the walls. If Buena Vista is to be won against sevenfold odds, Kentucky rifles and cavalry are ready. If Lopez needs men to be garotted or shot in a vain attempt upon Cuba, or if the little tyrant Walker calls for aid in establishing a slave-republic in Central America, Kentuckians are eager to brave fever and vomito, hunger and thirst, poisonous reptiles and more deadly semi-savages, all for glory and the love

of adventure. A Kentucky officer who had served in the Mexican war raised a rifle regiment for Kossuth, had them armed and equipped, and was ready to sail if the Magyar had only been able to make a beginning. I, William Tompkins, knew the colonel of the regiment, and have seen his commission from the ex-Governor of Hungary.

Preparations were speedily and silently made, and next morning at daylight, Manley and Cockburn, with three friends, all armed to the teeth, set out for Colonel Barwell's estate. All of them wore cloaks or loose coats, to conceal their weapons; and as they had kept their intention secret, they expected to take the enemy completely by surprise.

But the proverbial "little bird" carried the news; in this case it was a black bird—namely, Jake. In some mysterious way he heard of what was going on, and at once came to me.

"Massa Bill, dere's trouble a brewin' for ole Massa Barr'l. Dat yer Manley an' Cockburn is goin' to-morrer to fotch away Miss Cely, an' to shoot de ole man if he gits in de way."

Jake, in common with all his race, had a mortal contempt for "po'r white trash," and he was rejoiced beyond measure when his master came home victorious. "I spected he was done shet<sup>\*\*</sup> of dat po'r white-livered chap, an' dat Miss Cely'd be 'shamed of stoopin' to de low-flung people for a man. Gor-a-mighty, I hope ole massa 'll gib de whole crowd some lead to fotch back wid 'em! Don't you, Massa Bill?"

I had not made up my mind.

"But, Massa Bill, wouldn't you now be a frien' to ole massa, and jest ride over an' let him know, so's they shan't jump on him onawares?"

"Me! Go sixteen miles at night! I think I shall not interfere in the quarrel. Why don't you go yourself? Mind, I don't tell you to do it, nor advise you."

"Oh, massa, you'se sartin lawyer enough to know dat nigger's word ain't good for nothin' in court; an' if dere's any trouble, ole massa maybe 'll want to show that he knew de ras-cals was a comin'."

The astute Jake! To think that he was more far-seeing than I, in my own field!

Notwithstanding, I kept my ground. I did not see any reason why I should desire that Manley, or even the hare-brained Cockburn, should be shot. But Jake was bent on his errand, and, after borrowing a dollar from me, set out and found some white man to accompany him. I neither helped nor hindered.

A little after sunrise Miss Celia was making her toilette, when she heard the tramp of horses; she looked out of window and recognised her lover and Cockburn. What she felt, I don't pretend to say. For afterwards, when it became a matter of great importance to know, she kept her counsel. A remarkably intelligent and self-possessed person she proved to be. But at all events, she started up and ran down stairs in a

great fright to—to inform her father? I did not say so. For anything I know, she may have intended to run to her lover's arms. But in the hall her father was ready: his rifle on his arm, a double-barrelled deer-gun in the corner: powder, balls, buckshot, patches, and percussion-caps in a chair at his knee. She had not time to speak before he stepped forward, raised the rifle, and said, "Keep off! Don't open my gate, or I shall fire!"

"Don't shoot! Keep cool!" some one answered.

The party were close together, and Manley, in advance, was just opening the gate, a hundred yards or so from the porch where the colonel stood. The gate swung open, and the party coolly came on.

"Once more!" shouted the colonel, "I warn you!"

At the same instant the sharp crack of the rifle was heard, and Manley fell off his horse. His party responded with pistol-shots, but their fire fell short, and only enraged their antagonist. Quick as lightning he discharged a load of buckshot from the other gun, and winged two of them; one was Cockburn, whose right arm fell powerless at his side.

The horsemen now halted for parley. These movements took place within ten seconds from the time when Celia came down. It was not until after Colonel Barwell had set down the second gun, still smoking, by the door, that he became conscious of his daughter's presence. She had fallen to the floor and was grasping his knees with cries and supplications. She did not obey his stern order to go to her room, but still clung to him, weeping convulsively.

The two unwounded members of the expedition now dismounted and picked up the body of their unfortunate chief.

"Bring him in," said the colonel. "Is it peace or war?" he continued, as he rammed down a ball in his rifle. "Let us understand each other."

"Peace," was the reply.

Cockburn meanwhile, and his wounded companion, got off their horses with difficulty, and fainted from pain and loss of blood before they had gone ten steps. (I may as well state here that amputation became necessary in both cases.)

Manley was brought into the hall and laid on his cloak for a pillow. The colonel stood by unflinchingly; not a muscle moved. His daughter bent over the body in a paroxysm of grief, and, I dare say, of remorse. Manley breathed feebly, but his eyes were shut in insensibility. Presently he gave a groan, which shook his whole frame; his eyes slowly unclosed. "I told you!—we part—I die for you! Farewell!" He was dead.

The colonel drew a deep breath. "This is a sorry business, gentlemen," said he, "and I hope you are satisfied with your share in it."

No one ventured to answer. Celia still sat by the dead body, weeping and moaning.

The master of the house then called his servants, and gave orders for the care of the

\* In Kentucky, to be *shut of* a man is to be rid of him.

dead body. He despatched one for a surgeon, and ordered another to have his carriage ready. The wounded men were brought in to receive medical treatment.

Then, turning to one of the unfortunate party, he said :

"Of course this affair will require a legal investigation. My carriage is prepared. Please ride over to Squire Hemenway, the coroner ; ask him to have a jury summoned, and say that I and the witnesses are ready."

While waiting for the coroner, Colonel Barwell took his daughter aside and said,

"You must not blame me, Celia. I had information last night of their coming, in violation of agreement, to tear you from me by force. You are my child, and the law gives me the right to protect you and to defend my house from violence. You were not his wife, and he had no claim upon you, even if he had come with an officer instead of a party of armed desperadoes. And remember—for possibly I may not be allowed to give bail, but may have to be imprisoned until the trial comes on—remember, I say, that you saw Manley's hand on a revolver under his cloak as he came through the gate."

What she saw, or what she remembered or said, rests with her. I only give the facts that were brought out at the trial. Miss Celia, in a very distinct voice, then testified as her father wished, and, upon cross-examination, she admitted the conversation I have just recorded.

The coroner sat. A magistrate to whom the homicide surrendered himself bound him over to the next term of court. The colonel gave bail and went at large, as stately in his carriage, as proud and defiant, or as gracious and agreeable, as he had ever been. The day he was admitted to bail, he came to Barrington, and engaged counsel for the defence : among them, myself. It was my first important case, and I threw all my energies into its preparation. Of course I saw much of the colonel and of his daughter. The conflict in her mind was over. Her lover was in his grave ; her father was in danger ; and she was more drawn to the living than the dead. Perhaps in some little nook of her heart (if she had one) she preserved a recollection of the man who had paid for his love with his life ; but, for all that I could discern, Manley was as dead to her as though he had never existed.

I shall not report the trial, nor the speeches (two for the prosecution and four for the defence). My own speech, carefully written out, and rehearsed to an attentive audience of black-jacks half a mile out of town, is still on my files, endorsed

#### COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

vs.

JAMES BARWELL,  
Under Indictment for Murder.

Argument of W. T. for Defence.

Of course our client was acquitted. Who ever knew a Kentucky jury to convict where they believed there was "a fair fight?"

Cockburn and the Manleys railed at the jury, as might have been expected ; but a one-armed man might talk as much as he chose, since he could not take up the quarrel ; and as for the Manleys, what matter was it what a set of poor "no-account" wagon-makers said ?

"And Miss Celia?" She is married to a thriving planter in Tennessee. "Her father?" Lives on his estate, comfortable and respected.

"No poetical justice, then?" Not a particle.

I do not practise in Kentucky now ; this trial, and a few others in which I was concerned, gave me some food for reflection. I confess to a preference for dying in my bed like a Christian, and I have too keen a sense of the value of my existence to be ready to risk it for the sake of a client, who may not pay me after all. I don't desire to be pounded with hickory canes wielded at the court-house door, by witnessess wrathful at having been cross-examined. And, though I might have continued to steer clear of difficulties by caution and suavity, I thought it best to plant myself where "difficulties" are not quite so common.

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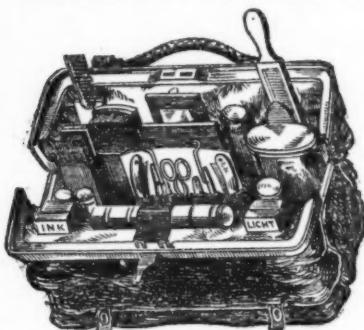
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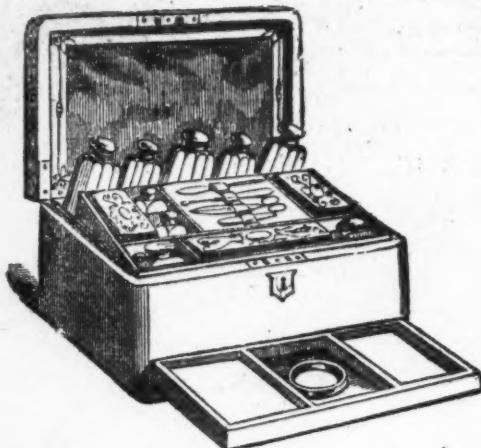
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